

HERITAGE COUNTS 2011

SOUTH EAST

Heritage Counts 2011 is the tenth annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. It is prepared by English Heritage on behalf of the South East Historic Environment Forum. This year the theme for Heritage Counts is the role of the historic environment in strengthening civil society. Visitors to the Heritage Counts website can download the complete research projects commissioned to support this year's report and access the full set of local statistics and maps detailing the historic environment for the South East, including asset data, funding information, employment numbers and visitor figures.
www.heritagecounts.org.uk

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND BIG SOCIETY

New research shows that the historic environment can provide the context and means for people to get involved in their local areas. Heritage groups are an important source for community input into shaping areas, with 85% of civic societies responding to planning applications. They also provide opportunities for people to take part in their community, with 50% of The Heritage Alliance members offering volunteering opportunities. To encourage more people to play a part in their local heritage, Heritage Counts presents a checklist which local heritage groups can use to widen and strengthen community involvement in their projects and groups. Please see the national Heritage Counts report for more detail.
www.heritagecounts.org.uk

HERITAGE AND LOCALISM IN THE SOUTH EAST

The historic environment of the South East has always been supported by the efforts of voluntary organisations and individuals. The findings of the three research projects outlined below show how important this work has been and how it can be strengthened in future.

Research by Civic Voice highlights the range of activities that civic groups are involved in. From survey responses of 74 societies and 270 individual volunteers (29% and 19% respectively of which were from the South East) it is clear that local people are already helping to shape their areas. For example, 85% of civic societies regularly comment on planning applications affecting their areas. Some 68% are also involved with conservation areas work. In the South East, local authorities like Elmbridge Borough Council have worked with community groups to undertake conservation area appraisals, leading directly to planning policies that protect them www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/heritage/chip.htm. This practice is becoming more widespread, with other local authorities, like Tunbridge Wells, developing partnerships with local groups for managing heritage as a response to diminishing resources, undertaking tasks such as writing conservation area appraisals

and piloting Article 4 Direction surveys. This not only allows important work to continue, but also brings considerable benefits for volunteers. These include a sense of worth in making a difference to their local area and social benefits like meeting people and learning new skills.

Research by The Heritage Alliance looked at the roles and contributions of heritage organisations, highlighting that many are already involved in Big Society activities. For example, the Argos Hill Windmill Trust have taken on responsibility for a post mill from Wealden District Council and will manage its restoration and opening to the public. In Margate, local volunteers are working to reopen their local museum, which had previously closed due to public funding cuts. The research outlines the support needed for heritage groups if their activities are to be sustained successfully. Groups need high-level advocacy on their behalf as well as practical support in terms of project funding, skill development and increased organisational capacity to undertake work.

Research by BritainThinks looked into widening participation in local heritage activities and groups. This explored the barriers to involvement, the actions the sector can take to attract new participants and provides a checklist local groups can use to develop solutions appropriate

to their needs. The South East Historic Environment Forum recognises that even if the term 'Big Society' becomes redundant, the concepts behind it will always be important to the sector's sustainability. We will continue to promote and support local groups in meeting these challenges.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES PROJECT



Individuals taking part in the Historic Landscape Project. © John Hinze Ltd

The Association of Gardens Trusts, Natural England and English Heritage are supporting volunteers from the South East's County Gardens Trusts (CGT) through a unique 3-year partnership project. The project aims to create a lasting legacy of more skilled and active CGT volunteers and a better understanding of CGTs by partner bodies. This will enable improved partnership working between CGTs, national agencies, and other

voluntary organisations, and increase links with local authority Historic Environment Records to improve historic designed landscape conservation in their local areas. Delivery is through training workshops, network support and a dedicated project officer to manage the programme. The workshops have encouraged participants to take a more active role in their communities, and volunteers are learning how to: engage better with local planning issues; undertake research that contributes to local designation of historic landscapes; and contribute to developing conservation management plans. For more information see www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/12-proj-historiclandscape.html

HERITAGE COUNTS: INDICATOR DATA

www.heritagecounts.org.uk provides a comprehensive set of statistics on the historic environment in the South East. The key changes for 2010/11 are highlighted below.

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSETS

Regional Assets	2011 totals
World Heritage Sites	2
Scheduled Monuments	2,633
Listed Buildings Grade I	1,730
Listed Buildings Grade II*	3,858
Listed Buildings Grade II	70,650
Registered Parks and Gardens	368
Registered Battlefields	6
Protected Ship Wrecks	19
Conservation Areas	2,115
Land in South East designated as National Park or AONB	37%
Online Historic Environment Records	11

CARING AND SHARING

HERITAGE AT RISK

In 2011 there were 516 entries on the Heritage at Risk register, unchanged since 2010. Ten Buildings at Risk entries were added, and 13 Buildings at Risk entries were removed.

MANAGING POSITIVELY

The number of planning application decisions in the South East rose by 8% between 2009/10 and 2010/11 (82,000 to 89,000) and listed building and conservation area consent decisions increased by 9% and 12% respectively. In 2010/11 there were 6,107 listed building consent decisions and 553 conservation area consent decisions. However the number of planning application decisions in 2010/11 was still 24% below those recorded in 2002/03 and there were 9% fewer listed building consents. There were 179 scheduled monument consents in 2010/11.

CAPACITY

In 2011 there were 159 full time equivalent (FTE) local authority historic environment staff in the South East. This is a 13.2% decrease in the past year while development affecting the historic environment was increasing. There have been greater losses among conservation officers than archaeological officers.

RESOURCES

In 2010/11 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the largest funder of heritage in the South East, distributed £20.4m, 28% more than the £15.9m it awarded in 2009/10 and 9.6% of their spend in the UK. In total 176 awards were made, constituting 10.9% of awards made nationally. Whilst HLF's share of lottery funds will increase to 20% in 2012, the amount of funding available is still well below the 2002/03 level of £35.1m.

USING AND BENEFITING

Participation in the South East's historic environment continues to increase. In 2011 English Heritage membership in the South East stood at 189,000 and there were 6,394 friends of the Historic Houses Association – both record numbers. In the South East (inc. London) the National Trust has 1.2 million members in 2010/11. Visitor numbers to staffed National Trust properties have risen by 1% and to English Heritage staffed sites by 3% between 2009/10 and 2010/11 to 4.7m and 1.2m respectively, with the number of educational visitors to English Heritage sites increasing by 12% between 2009/10 and 2010/11 to 158,000. The number of National Trust volunteers continues to increase (now at 14,750) and English Heritage has launched a new volunteering initiative that has seen 650 volunteers participate in the first year nationally.

There has also been a 10% rise in the number of Heritage Open Days events between 2009 and 2010 to 1,179.

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

2011 has been another year of challenges for the historic environment sector; not least in terms of funding and changes to the planning system.

The forthcoming Localism Bill and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will bring significant threats and opportunities for heritage protection. Whilst the sector is working hard to ensure its concerns are heard nationally, it is also supporting the opportunities the changes bring for local communities. Sector partners have published guidance on transferring heritage assets from local authorities to community organisations and advice on including heritage in rural areas' local plans – with a forthcoming urban equivalent in production. Best practice guidance on how local authorities and local people can work together to create lists of significant local heritage assets will also be published. These initiatives will help the sector to meet future challenges in the full knowledge that widespread partnership between public and voluntary groups will be the key to sustaining effective heritage conservation, enhancing local understanding and increasing enjoyment of local historic environments.

Heritage Counts 2011 is produced by English Heritage on behalf of the South East Historic Environment Forum.

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